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RAFIKI FOUNDATION MISSIONARY NEWSLETTER



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Missionary #245

*“For everything there
is a season, and a time
for every matter under
heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).*

Dear friends and family,

Amber and I arrived in Uganda in December 2022, and now nearly three years later, it feels as though we just stepped off the plane. Time truly flies. So much has happened in this short span, yet when we reflect, it all seems like yesterday.

One of the most vivid reminders of time’s swift passage is our daughter, Anaiah. It feels like she was born just moments ago, and now she is eight months old—sitting up, eating solid foods, and nearly walking. For perspective, when we last wrote a newsletter, Anaiah was just three months old and exclusively on a milk diet. Today, she enjoys apple sauce, pasta, chicken, and potatoes—with milk on the side, of course. We are deeply grateful to God for her health and steady (though to me rapid!) growth. Amber has blossomed into an incredible mother, and the Ugandan women in our church often commend her, noting how healthy Anaiah looks. We thank God for His grace in this journey of parenting. While we cherish these moments with Anaiah, life around us continues to unfold.



In June, I had the honor of being the best man at a friend’s wedding from our church. Interestingly in Uganda, the best man dresses exactly like the groom—a tradition I learned has a practical twist. If someone attempts to kidnap the groom, they might mistakenly take the best man instead. So, I was essentially a decoy!



The decoy

Later in June and into early July, I visited several schools in villages deep in the bush that are using the Rafiki Education System. Some are just beginning, while others have been using part of the system for over a year. It is inspiring to see their perseverance and commitment to quality education, even amidst very challenging circumstances. August and September were training months. Two schools from west Uganda came to learn how to properly teach the curriculum by observing our school and participating in pedagogical training that I lead. It is always a delight to see the spark in the teachers' eyes as their minds are open to a "New-Old Way" of teaching. I am looking forward to more schools joining our system of education that puts God at the center of it all. Pictures to the right and below are partner schools that have adopted the Rafiki Education System.



Paul instructing teachers

Finally, through our partnership with Crossway, this year we received 5,000 Global Study Bibles. We are working on handing them out to those who are in desperate need of them. We have so far handed out only a few as we are looking towards giving them to groups that can navigate using a study Bible. We hope to give 2,000 of them to a big group of teachers come next year at a conference being held by the church of Uganda for teachers. As I have learned, “transformed people, transform people.” *Be in prayer with us that all these Bibles will land in hands that will delight in them and use them for the glory of our Lord and Savior.*



Global Study Bible recipients

In the Rafiki School we continue to see rapid growth. Our new grade five (second stream) class is flourishing under the leadership of former Rafiki resident and university graduate Teacher Tonny. His love for God’s Word displayed in his classroom as his teaching exemplifies what it means to become a godly contributor. It has been wonderful to see the fruit of God’s work in him.

In preschool, children were preparing the manners song for recitation. Parents of the four-year-old class were contacting the Head Teacher to ask about the manners song because their children were starting to tell their parents and visitors at home how to have good manners. That they should pray before they eat, not chew with their mouths open, say please and thank you, etc... Parents comment that though it is hard to adjust, they are grateful.

In primary school, Head Teacher Chriz reported an interaction with some former students’ parents. The parents primary aged students used to attend Rafiki School where they enjoyed participating in the chess club. They relocated and had to transfer to a new school. At their new school, they took the initiative to talk to the teachers about chess and donated their chess boards to the school for use. They went on to start a chess club at the school, and they are teaching their classmates to play chess. They told Teacher Chriz that they are also petitioning for hymns to be sung at their school like they did at Rafiki. In the same light, a new parent to Rafiki called yesterday grateful for the Word being taught in Rafiki. She explained how the previous evening her husband and she were in tears as they listened to their children joyfully singing hymns while they did housework. She explained how much they have been praying for their children to know the Lord and enjoy him. May the Lord continue to cultivate their hearts for his kingdom.

As the work in the outreach schools and Rafiki Schools continues, pray for the Word of God to be proclaimed and received. As Anaiyah continues to grow, pray for us to lean on the Lord to know how to guide her and care for her. As we continue to serve Rafiki, pray for the Lord to provide the financial support we need to raise each month. And as we continue in this journey called life, pray that our faith and trust will remain in the Lord forever and ever.

Love,

Amber and Paul Okoth